

THE
**FUTURE
OF
AMERICA'S
NATIONAL
PARKS**

First Annual
Centennial Strategy for

National Parks of New York Harbor

August 2007

CENTENNIAL INITIATIVE



Site: NPNH

Year: 2007

Vision Statement

The mission of the National Parks of New York harbor is to enhance the identity, visibility and public support of our sites; to collaborate with others in the New York-New Jersey metropolitan area in the care and appropriate use of all historic, recreational and natural resources; and to promote the National Park System.

NPNH will carry out its mission in cutting-edge ways that embody the best NPS traditions while creating new models of collaboration among parks and partners that benchmark excellence in programs, services and support, and that brand NPS as a significant and desirable partner in and around New York Harbor.

Because the NPNH vision is built on the premise of both internal and external partnerships the Centennial Challenge is a perfect fit. Its ten-year time frame parallels that of NPNH to reach major benchmarks. And, our parks are a front door to the National Park System for millions of diverse urban residents. The Challenge will help us throw that door open.

The projects we propose now and those waiting in the wings are selected to meet major NPNH goals to improve visibility, credibility, philanthropic support, access, earned revenue and 21st century relevancy. Targeting selected audiences, park resources and potential partners we will leverage Challenge dollars to improve the condition of park resources and opportunities for employees. A linchpin of our vision is the provision of new wayfinding and waterborne transportation systems to the parks, and two of our initial proposed projects start that work. Other nominated projects will be designed in conjunction with the managers of non-NPS protected resources to establish a broader network of collaborative stewardship in New York Harbor. Over time, we intend to provide other forms of access through media and the Internet. We will also establish educational and visitor programs of broad variety taking advantage of new, green technologies, so that a much greater percentage of New Yorkers and New Jerseyites, as well as visitors, know the NPS brand and associate it with excellence.

Several prominent organizations have expressed interest in the Centennial Challenge initiative and projects put forth by NPNH and its member parks. Some are already park partners and others have been newly drawn to consider us. Park management, staff and volunteers stand ready to take advantage of the opportunities that the Centennial Challenge will offer.

Park/ Superintendent/ Program Manager

Maria Burks, Commissioner

Site: NPNH

STEWARDSHIP

☒ Provide inspiring, safe, and accessible places for people to enjoy - the standard to which all other park systems aspire.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

We will increase visitation at lesser known parks. We will expand dramatically the number of interpretive contacts made by park staff by the use of new technologies. Because access will be enhanced through technology, persons with disabilities will have virtual access to park stories, and sites that may be difficult to visit in person.

☒ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: NPNH

STEWARDSHIP

☒ Set the standard of excellence in urban park landscape design and maintenance.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

New signs designed to new wayfinding and design standards will enhance the image of park sites in this developed urban context.

☒ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: NPNH

STEWARDSHIP

☒ Assure that no compelling chapter in the American heritage experience remains untold and that strategically important landscapes are acquired, as authorized by Congress.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

The critical story of the health of the ocean ecosystem will be brought to life via curriculum-based approach to a new urban youth audience. These projects will increase visitor satisfaction, understanding and appreciation of our mission by better technology and wayfinding signs.

☒ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: NPNH

STEWARDSHIP

☒ Serve as the Preeminent resource laboratory by applying excellence in science and scholarship to understand and respond to environmental changes.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

We are developing internships to research and provide real world ocean stewardship activities around New York Harbor's estuarine systems.

☒ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: NPNH

STEWARDSHIP

☒ Encourage children to be future conservationists.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

As part of our Educational Network project the NPS will establish an Advisory Team composed of local NY-NJ high school teachers and administrators. Working together, the NPS, the Advisory Team and consultants will assess the human, programmatic and facility resources available at the parks relative to the needs of the high school population, currently an underserved segment of our educational program audience.

☒ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: NPNH

ENVIRONMENT

☒ Reduce environmental impacts of park operations.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Building new waterborne interpretive services may reduce the impact of automobile traffic at certain park sites.

☐ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: NPNH

ENVIRONMENT

☒ Inspire an environmental conscience in Americans.

☒ Establish programs to showcase exemplary environmental practices and increase visitor awareness of how the practices apply to their daily lives, as measured by surveys.

Establish internship programs to research and develop better environmental practices in ocean stewardship activities around New York Harbor's estuarine system.

☒ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

☒ Demonstrate environmental excellence through increased use of alternative energy and fuels at every park.

Evaluation of water audio tour providers will include consideration of their use of green technologies in their boat operations.

☐ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: NPNH

ENVIRONMENT

☒ Engage partners, communities, and visitors in shared environmental stewardship.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

We will engage partners, communities and visitors in shared environmental stewardship through better technology, good wayfinding signage, research and education.

☒ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: NPNH

RECREATION

☒ Encourage collaboration among and assist park and recreation systems at every level—federal, regional, state, local—to help build an outdoor recreation network accessible to all Americans.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Better signage and technology will connect more visitors with the 23 sites in the National Parks of New York Harbor system and connect them to those of other partners around New York Harbor, including city and state parks.

☒ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: NPNH

RECREATION

☒ Establish "volun-tourism" excursions to national parks for volunteers to help achieve natural and cultural resource protection goals.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Our program will fund internships to connect with a diverse population of young, potential future park partners and/or park employees.

☒ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: NPNH

RECREATION

☒ Expand partnerships with schools and boys and girls associations to show how national park experiences can improve children's lives.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

As part of the Educational Network proposal we will request an analysis and assessment of educational opportunities at the high school level that will engage New York/New Jersey high school teachers, administrators and students to identify programs that could exist between NPNH and the schools.

☒ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: NPNH

RECREATION

☒ Focus national, regional, and local tourism efforts to reach diverse audiences and young people and to attract visitors to lesser-known parks.

☒ Increase visitation by 25 percent at lesser-known parks through a national tourism effort aimed at helping people to discover the breadth of parks and experiences.

We will increase visitation at lesser known parks. We will expand dramatically the number of interpretive contacts made by park staff by the use of new technologies. Because access will be enhanced through technology, persons with disabilities will have virtual access to park stories, and sites that may be difficult to visit in person.

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☒ Increase the number of visitors that attend ranger-facilitated programs such as campfire talks, hikes, and school programs.

Better technology will increase the ability of rangers to assist and educate more visitors. We will expand the educational platform of all the NPNH sites by increased educational initiatives. Rangers will accompany new audio tours on the boats to provide gray and green contact.

☒ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: NPNH

EDUCATION

☒ Cooperate with educators to provide curriculum materials, high-quality programs, and park-based and online learning.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

The NPS will establish an Advisory Team composed of New York/New Jersey high school teachers and administrators in the development of a curriculum-based program to serve high school students. There will be a web-based delivery system for cooperative education and internship opportunities, and professional staff development for teachers.

☒ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: NPNH

EDUCATION

☒ Introduce young people and their families to national parks by using exciting media and technology.

☒ Increase the number of web hits through the introduction of advanced, interactive features that attract young people to national parks.

We will provide audio and web-based tours for fee/free on the Internet, in the parks and on the water. This gives NPS the opportunity to reach diverse audiences and young people, and attracts visitors to lesser-known parks. We will develop exciting media and technology to introduce young people to parks.

☒ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: NPNH

EDUCATION

☒ Promote life-long learning to connect generations through park experiences.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Through well organized and relevant programs, the NPNH will be able to reach a widely diverse ethnic population and help the NPS achieve its mission of stewardship and resource protection and expose students to future career opportunities through the internship program.

☒ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: NPNH

EDUCATION

☒ **Impart to every American a sense of their citizen ownership of their national parks.**

☒ **Increase visitors' satisfaction, understanding, and appreciation of the parks they visit.**

Develop comprehensive, interpretive waysides and other visual identity pieces for parks that are now invisible and hard to find. More visitors will find the parks and appreciate them through previously unavailable media, personal services and classroom experiences.

☒ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

☒ **Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)**

The NPNH is the portal through which millions of urban, diverse residents will access the National Park System. This is the only exposure that this population is likely to have in the National Park Service.

☒ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: NPNH

PROFESSIONALISM

☒ **Be one of the top 10 places to work in America.**

☒ **Meet 100 percent of diversity recruitment goals by employing people who reflect the face of America.**

We are building a future employment pool by developing a curriculum based system to serve the needs of the high school population and to develop an internship program which will appeal to high school students in the NY-NJ area and lead to the eventual hiring from this ethnically and racially diverse population group.

☒ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

☒ **Attain the highest employee satisfaction rate of all federal agencies, as measured by Office of Personnel Management surveys.**

These projects are multi-park by design and will provide new work experiences and developmental opportunities for park employees that would never have existed without these programs. This is a significant improvement especially for employees of the eight small park areas.

☒ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: NPNH

PROFESSIONALISM

☒ Use strategic planning to promote management excellence.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Interpark strategic planning to develop these projects has built leadership awareness and skill in developing and taking advantage of new political relationships and new business opportunities.

☒ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: NPNH

PROFESSIONALISM

☒ Model what it means to work in partnership.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

These programs are a result of developing strong internal and external partnerships which in turn have strengthened these partnerships. NPNH was built on the premise that the parks will be more successful working with and through such partnerships. These projects epitomize that.

☒ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: NPNH

PROFESSIONALISM

☒ Make national parks the first choice in philanthropic giving among those concerned about environmental, cultural, and recreational values.

☒ Improve communications and marketing capacity to increase public understanding of our mission, opportunities, and benefits.

All three projects are designed to make the national parks more visible and credible to a discriminating donor base. Both the wayfinding branding and marketing project and the educational network/internship project will pull together a broad coalition of city interests that will create very attractive funding opportunities for donors concerned about the environment and the recovery of lower Manhattan.

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